

THE LABOUR ORGANISER

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THE SECRETARY'S PAGE

HELP AND HINTS IN SEASON.

The Scramble for Speakers.

We have more than once in this column dealt with the question of getting speakers, but still complaints come in from local Parties in dire need stating that they cannot get speakers, and advice is sought as to how to succeed.

It cannot be too often stated to local units that the Labour Party has got no compulsory powers over the speakers in the Movement, nor is it ever likely to possess them, and the whole question of the distribution of the Party's platform efforts is likely to remain for many years to come in a somewhat unsatisfactory condition. Resolutions of censure or of complaint directed against the Labour Party and its officers are just so much waste time and temper. At the present stage in the Party's development, where for the lack of a sufficient press, the platform bears most of the brunt, there are all sorts of conflicting claims falling upon the leading speakers in the Movement. The propagandist M.P., for instance, has probably his own Socialist organisation to satisfy besides the general demands of the Labour Movement, and even the right wing M.P., not so often in demand, may have his Trades Union and similar connections to demand his spare dates. National speakers who are M.P.s, have few spare dates, and if he is a busy professional man the same thing applies. And when any National speaker has dates that are free there are the calls of his own constituency, which often means exchanging dates in other places; and there are the calls of friendship, and personal obligations entered into, sometimes a little lightly, to oblige associates, and the most pressing of one's acquaintances. Anyway, the free dates for unknown Local Parties are scarce; competition for them is keen; and the problem resolves itself largely into how one might succeed in being first amongst all one's competitors.

And a Better 'ole.

That is the practical position regarding speakers with which our Local Parties are really confronted and until resources are greater there is little help for it.

Before giving one or two hints in this matter it may be as well to remark that the Party places too much reliance on a few well-known names and makes too many demands upon their holders. For London and the Near Counties and the Midland Districts Speakers' Lists have been compiled, and if one excludes the hundred or so prominent names there is really an abundance of speaking effort at the disposal of the Party. It is from these reserves that the stars of the future will emerge, and it is a curious kink with some of our supporters that these younger men should be passed over in favour of the more crystalised leader, while all the time they profess another tendency altogether!

Some Hints.

Now a few words of advice. If a prominent speaker is really necessary it is precious little use merely writing to him and asking for a date. Speakers are just human and that curt request from an unknown correspondent, who conveys neither warmth nor information in his letter, is sure to be passed over.

Some of the things that speakers want are:—

(1) A stamped addressed envelope to reply to you. It is unfair to expect speakers to bear a heavy postal burden in declining invitations.

(2) A choice of dates. An intimation of the probable hour of meeting (afternoon or evening), and the nature of the meeting.

(3) If the speaker is not personally known to you or familiar with your constituency a point of contact is worth making. Have you a local supporter who knows him and can offer hospitality, or who can promise

to see the speaker or whom you can say will see the speaker on such and such an occasion relating to the engagement? Or can you bring the speaker's mind back in some way to a pleasant recollection or remembrance of the place.

(4) A reference to the speaker's means of getting to and from the constituency is sometimes highly desirable. Remember that it is difficult to take M.P.'s away from Parliamentary duties. A Saturday or Sunday is best for them, with Friday as the third choice. Some speakers will chance a Monday following a week-end engagement in the Provinces, but this is an encroachment on Parliamentary time which it is not fair to ask for. A town on a main line to London has perhaps advantages in train service which can be mentioned. Alternatively, another place has a famous hotel or local connections or attractions that might attempt an overnight visit; or again a town may be on the route of a prominent speaker to and from his own constituency and a break-the-journey arrangement can be suggested.

The above are just a few suggestions which occur to one. Analysed out it will be seen that they do not necessarily involve a long letter, but they anticipate points which a speaker would consider, and if the letter is typewritten and posted to the right address it is the sender of such letters who will generally score.

As a last thought if you have good halls don't forget to mention them and then see that every arrangement and the advertising is efficiently carried out, and that the speaker gets his reminder and full details in plenty of time. He will then come again.

Starting a Local Paper.

During the last few months we have had several requests for full details on how to start a local newspaper. Local circumstances differ so much, as do local needs, that it is impossible to tender any general practical instructions on this point. We have generally replied to enquirers by referring them to other papers already established, and to the schemes for chains of papers put forward by the Labour Party, and in one or two instances by others. We fear that almost invariably there is a tendency to go in for something too

ambitious at the start. Has not Labour had sufficient lessons in this direction with its national papers as also in abundance of cases of local journals? Years ago experienced journalists used to say that another "Daily" could never be established. And can we truthfully say that the Labour Party has succeeded in establishing one despite its immense potentiality and enormous sacrifices—on the business lines contemplated by those who made that observation? The establishment of a Labour Daily has involved unheard-of sacrifices. And in lesser measure the same thing is true of weekly journals and even monthly papers. An orthodox weekly paper is almost an impossibility to be established to-day under normal business conditions. And as the sacrifices that Labour is prepared to make for its papers in any part of the country hardly counter-balance the difficulties, orthodox papers, such as we are so often asked about, seem therefore beyond our hopes.

Against the Orthodox.

But why should we desire all the burden, machinery, yes and the padding, plus the journalistic incubus in a wage sense of the normal Provincial paper? We believe there is a great future before Labour Provincial journalism; that this wing of Labour is yet only in its infancy, but that if it is to succeed it must strike out on its own original lines, defy all precedents, and be as original in its form, as it is divided from its enemies by its principles.

There is the question first of all of get-up. Why on earth should Labour need a huge and many-paged sheet such as the Capitalist issues, of which 50 per cent. is advertisements and 49 per cent. sheer uninteresting bunkum? Labour papers must be smaller and there must be more of them. They will contain propaganda matter and news principally, with a very contracted advertisement revenue, and if the wisest councils prevail they will form part and parcel of the machinery of the Party, and be distributed through its collectors rather than by and through the ordinary wholesale channels. A genuine live paper eagerly read from week to week or month to month need actually not consist in the beginning of more than one quarto sheet printed both sides—we would even say an octavo sheet. In these days of Broadcasting, Picture

Palaces, and abundant literature, the little pungent paper with the punch can be what the submarine is to the battleship; and it is precisely that comparison which we wish to point to as good for Labour papers. We would advocate that every Labour centre, not necessarily the Divisional Party, should seek to get its own organ, but let it be the humble and effective one involving no great financial risk, nor journalistic salary, but such as can be pocketed and pushed from door to door or in field or factory, and on any and every occasion where the Labour Missionaries go forth.

Speakers' Expenses.

An excellent method of allotting speakers' expenses in a County Division was recently noted by us in the Bosworth Division of Leicestershire, and may serve as a guide to others. In this case, as not infrequently happens, a speaker was engaged by the Divisional Party to tour the Division, his services being utilised by the various Local Parties and Polling District Committees. Now in almost all such arrangements differences of opinion take place as to how the expenses shall be met. In a few exceptional cases the Divisional Party gets landed with the whole of such expense. In other places pooling schemes are worked out, and in yet others guarantees for the expenses are arranged between the most powerful Local Parties in the Division and the Divisional Party. The Bosworth Division seem to possess the best scheme we have yet seen. There was a nominal guarantee first sought from each Party which utilised the speaker on a share-and-share-alike basis. Each would contribute its proportion (presumably one-seventh for a seven-day week) of the expenses. But naturally halls differed and consequently opportunities, and so it was arranged that the Parties benefitting by these things, and clearing more than their expenses, should put a proportion of such surplus into a pool for the relief of the less fortunate Parties. This seems to us an equitable arrangement affording the maximum of incentive, while inflicting the minimum of hardship on the weaker places.

We would particularly like to draw the attention of secretaries to Mr. Miles' announcement below. A first-rate selection of original propaganda is presented to our readers by an experienced lecturer and Labour stalwart.

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XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

THAT RURAL AREA.

Progress slow but sure seems to be attending the efforts of the Labour Party in the rural areas where Labour has, as yet, by no means recovered the position in which it stood industrially in 1920. It is not our purpose here to deal with the reasons or the facts that lie behind the above statements which, however, are commonplace to every area organiser.

We want instead to present one or two hints of a helpful nature to the officers and Parties who are seeking to make ground in the undeveloped areas. In almost all but the purely urban, or mining type, of County Division, the Labour position is that there is some centre, or centres of activity, more often of an urban character, and from these centres the agricultural desert around gets what political sustenance it may. In few places indeed is the position reversed, and it can be said that the constituency as a whole functions for Labour and contributes to its Divisional Party.

It is probably true that by spending large sums of money most agricultural constituencies could be made to produce a chain of Labour Committees and organised Parties. That indeed is one of the poignant facts of the situation, i.e., that had we the money the organisation could be built, for the real difficulty in the way of the functioning of so many territorial Parties is largely one of transit and communication, and the expense of sustaining continual interest in Labour policy.

But there are palliatives; and we have collected two or three for the purposes of this article. Let us take the position that is so common—that of a Divisional organisation which knows of individual supporters, or even perhaps of past officers, in outlying villages and hamlets, but who, because they are so few, cannot be effectively “organised” and cannot be brought to meetings. Shall these people be neglected till the chances of political warfare bring another election along, when our isolated friend is expected to lend his room or lend his services during the asperities of a political contest?

The best thing we have seen done in this situation is to mark these isolated friends down as “correspondents.” Let

their names be collected and kept, then utilise every possible opportunity of sending them news of battle in other centres. The “Labour Press Service” is an admirable publication of which a quantity may be obtained at a fractional price for utilisation among these “correspondents.”

To supply each correspondent with a copy of the “Labour Press Service” each week would cost approximately 4/- per head per annum, including postage. Is not this trivial expense worth going to to keep the spark alive in remote villages? But we would add to this the occasional letter, even if it is only to convey an invitation to some function the recipient probably cannot attend; the letter is news—it is contact, it shows remembrance, and it encourages thought concerning the Party and its welfare. If the method we advise is more generally adopted we believe that many an outpost would develop into a valuable centre. And even where Parties and Committees cannot be sustained news would percolate and interest be kept up.

Now the next hint is applicable both to the “correspondent” of the kind above mentioned and to a regularly appointed secretary of a Polling District Committee. Give them memo. books and a letter pad. You want news sometimes; you want replies, to know whether your correspondent or secretary is dead or alive; and above all, you yearn to get that occasional letter, not perhaps very erudite, or easily understood, but the one which tells of the progress of opinion and the headway that is being made on the countryside.

Now in the hamlets and the villages and the bare beyond, blackberries and crab apples are more plentiful than memo. books and writing pads. *Think of his position and his convenience* and these little trifles will be forthcoming. In time you will get what you want.

Perhaps your organisation has got a little further. Maybe you have a local secretary—or better still you have developed to the point where collectors have been appointed to bring in your subscriptions. Mr. Gee, of North Norfolk, who knows something of rural organisation (North Norfolk is the only truly rural constituency at present held by Labour, the Member

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Two Great Bargains

The Editor of "L.O." is, under medical advice, giving up motoring, and offers for sale his two cars, at an exceptional sacrifice. It is *your* opportunity. Both cars are in high condition and worth double the price asked. Tutoring given if desired.

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"Fazzi" is not advised for one person. She runs best fully loaded and is ideal for carrying voters to the poll, workers to country meetings, and similar uses. A near offer has been received from a purchaser, for chassis only, with a view to conversion to a lorry or van.

No. 2

"Beattie"

£75

Beattie, dear readers, has been offered to you before—at a higher price. But your pockets weren't long enough—or your hearts weren't bold; but then I loved her!
I don't want to sell!

10 h.p. all-weather Bayliss-Thomas 2-seater with double dickey (4-seater chassis). The joy of your life to drive. Beattie will carry 4 Socialists, and their luggage (dead or alive), all day long at 40 m.p.h., 35 m.p.g. All parts in excellent condition. Beattie's engine is now being re-bushed at a cost of approx. £15, and when sold will be in as perfectly engined condition as when new.

Drinkwater, *your* Editor, Fernhill Heath, Nr. Worcester

being Noel Buxton, M.P., late Minister of Agriculture) makes a point of advertising the collectors or secretaries' names on any leaflets or handbills announcing meetings that are likely to circulate in the area. Obviously care is sometimes needed, but where it can be done there is a public status conferred on your collector or secretary which carries a long way, and in its turn reflects a benefit on your Party. Mr. Gee finds the plan quite excellent.

The last tip to-day is to keep your eye open for the villager born to politics, the type of whom has been reproduced in thousands since long before the countryman ever got a vote at all. The political battles of the past and the historic victories of democratic thought have not all been in the towns—by no means.

One finds occasionally in the villages a type of man whose interest and activities go out to politics as the duck takes to water. He knows his countryside, the politics of this and that family, where votes are to be got, or where new voters should be put upon the register. This type of man knows nothing of delegateship or team work in organisation. He is a kingdom to himself, but he sways votes and polls votes. These men are to be found; they are worth getting on your side, and the canvassing of villages by hordes of strangers is not to be compared with the work of one such village politician, once you have educated and brought him to your fold. Keep this man in contact with you through the "Labour Press Service" and other means, and by and by his strong individuality assimilates the Party outlook—you have struck gold.

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WOMEN CANDIDATURES.

We note with interest that the Wrekin Division has added one more to the list of Labour Women Parliamentary Candidates, Miss E. Picton Turbervill, O.B.E., having recently been unanimously selected.

In view of the unwarranted timidity concerning women candidates which still obsesses certain members of our own ranks, who ought to know better, we venture to print the following notes which have been sent to us from a reliable source. We do not accept responsibility for the figures given, but we have every reason to believe that they are correct:—

A statement was made at a recent meeting in depreciation of the results of women candidatures at the last election. It was one of those generalisations which hearers were expected to accept as gospel on the spot, but no proofs were forthcoming. We have therefore taken some trouble to investigate matters, going most carefully into the figures of the votes given to women candidates at the last three elections, and we find, somewhat to our astonishment, be is confessed, that not only did the women **not** do badly, but that they did extraordinarily well.

The average votes for women candidates have been as follows:—

1922 Election, average votes polled 6,911

1923 " " " " 8,051

1924 " " " " 9,750

But for one or two freak candidates the average would have been much higher, e.g., a Miss Richardson stood for Acton, though Conservative, Labour and Liberal all stood. She called herself Independent and polled only 1,700 votes, thus bringing the average down very heavily.

At the last election a total of 33 women of all Parties stood as candidates. With the exception of those who had already won their seats and were Members of Parliament, not one of the 33 stood for a seat that was previously held by her Party. Moreover, seven of them stood for constituencies which their Party had never contested. The long and short of the matter is that nearly all the women candidates were courageously standing for hopeless seats. And the figures above shown indicate how well they fared in spite of things.

Now let us look at some who stood for the Labour Party.

Dr. Stella Churchill, who stood for North Hackney, was the first Labour Candidate to stand for that constituency. In a three-corner contest she secured 6,997 votes, which was 24.2 per cent. of the whole poll.

Mrs. Drake also stood for a constituency which had never been contested by Labour—West Lewisham. She gathered 6,756 votes in a three-corner fight, taking 20 per cent. of the poll.

Miss Spurrell, for Totnes (Devon), a stronghold of Toryism, also stood for a constituency that had never been fought by Labour. She took 2,240 votes—6 per cent. of the total poll; not as good as the others, but a very useful beginning. What she had to face may be gathered from her subsequent libel action, where her cowardly accusers had not the courage to go into the witness-box.

Miss E. Stuart (North Edinburgh) in a three-corner fight, secured 27.9 per cent., or otherwise 8,192 votes.

We may be forgiven for emphasising that the above four were standing for constituencies that Labour had previously looked upon as hopeless.

Now with regard to the other candidate all of these (except the two or three Members of Parliament) had immense majorities against them.

Miss Picton Turbervill (above-mentioned) stood for Mid-Gloucester, which had not even been contested the previous year. There was an adverse majority of 9,000 to pull down. She increased the Labour poll from 17.7 per cent. of the total to 25.3 per cent. and polled 7,418 votes.

Mrs. Ayrton Gould contested Northwich in 1924. The Labour vote in 1923 was 9,183—with a male candidate. Mrs. Gould increased this figure to 11,630, pulling the average from 29.9 per cent. to 34.5 per cent. of the total poll.

Dr. Ethel Bentham has steadily pulled up the poll for Labour in East Islington from 22.8 per cent. to 32.3 per cent. in the last election. Yet all the contests mentioned have been three-cornered contests, where percentages divided among three candidates are obviously not so high as in "straight" fights.

Miss Ellen Wilkinson, in East Middlesbrough, did splendidly for Labour. In the 1923 election Mr. Connelly polled 7,712 votes. Less

than a year later Miss Wilkinson added nearly 2,000 to the poll and won the seat.

Even the women who lost their seats did not necessarily lose votes.

Thus Miss Susan Lawrence added no less than 1,420 to her poll of 1923, but yet lost the seat.

There were losses of course like Miss Bondfield's and Miss Jewson's, but then Labour **men** lost their seats too. Wasn't it nearly 40 of them in the Red Letter Election of 1924?

We could have added other names to the lists above, such as Miss Jessie Stephen, who increased her poll at Portsmouth, but enough has been said to show that women candidates have done very well indeed, and that there was no truth in the statement which we have taken to task.

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INDIVIDUAL v. AFFILIATED MEMBERSHIP.

An article on the above subject written at the request of several correspondents and outlining the functions and obligations of both classes of membership is unavoidably held over till next month.

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS.

ARTICLE II.

SELECTING THE CANDIDATES.

Before we proceed further it is necessary to correct an unfortunate slip which crept into our first article of this series last month. We then gave particulars of the qualifications and disqualifications of candidates for Boards of Guardians and District Councils, making mention of a special qualification which existed for "those qualified to be elected a councillor for a Borough" in the case of a Board of Guardians whose area extended from without to within the Borough.

We went on to show that certain persons were *disqualified* from being elected to a Borough Council, and therefore would be disqualified from being elected to the Guardians, unless they possessed one of the other and more ordinary qualifications. But the illustration we gave was unfortunate, for we gave as an instance a clergyman, though we might have selected an elective auditor as an instance, or a person holding "an office or place of profit." It so happens, however, that the very disqualification we quoted as an illustration was removed by a special Act of Parliament passed a month or two ago. Our article, written, but not used for the 1924 Council Elections, was then correct, but obviously it has now to be modified by the statement that the disqualification of clergymen has now ended (see Act of Parliament printed on page).

We have also one more *qualification* to enumerate. Labour Candidates are not ordinarily wealthy enough to be the owners of property and consequently are not so often likely to be benefitted as their opponents by the following additional qualification enacted by Section 10 of the Representation of the People Act, 1918.

"A person shall, in addition to and without prejudice to any other qualification be qualified to be elected a member of the local government authority for any local government electoral area if he is the owner of property held by freehold, copyhold, leasehold, or any other tenure within the area of that authority."

We have on past occasions answered queries in our columns concerning the application of the above provision and as to whether "joint" ownership would qualify.

The time has now arrived when candidates for the Guardians and District Councils should be definitely selected. Here regard must be had for the rules of the Party, and in the various sets of model rules definite provisions are laid down for the selection of Local Government candidates. Thus in Boroughs or areas covered by a Local Party, candidates are nominated to the Executive Committee by affiliated societies, or by the Individual Sections, and the General Committee (not the E.C.) has the power of endorsement. But candidates so nominated and endorsed are not yet full-fledged candidates until the Ward Committee has selected the candidate at a Joint Conference of the Ward Committee and the General Committee. This sounds a little involved, but it is feasible and democratic. Ward Committees must not have the choice of candidates entirely in their own hands, nor must central and borough Executives do all the selecting.

Now although the above rule is ordinarily in every way workable in the towns there are very many areas, nominally the areas of particular Local Labour Parties covering a rural or urban district, where the ward committees or polling district committees have never yet developed. In such cases it is necessary to select candidates in a somewhat more rough and ready manner, but regard should always be had to the general principles of *central control of policy and local choice of individual candidates*.

Now nobody ought to deceive themselves in the belief that the above rule will work of itself. As a matter of fact real hard work is necessary on the part of a good many people if the candidates are to be forthcoming. Democratic though our procedure is for selection, individual initiative, and much persuasion is often needed to get people to allow their names to go forward. That panel of candidates will not materialise of itself. The difficulty in producing candidates is most marked in the Rural Areas where attendance at Council meetings is most difficult of all.

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Now if our thoughts run in the direction of male candidates only we are, after all, only multiplying our troubles. Women candidates are ideal for Board of Guardians (and Rural Councils where of course the Councillors serve as Guardians), and an early discussion with the Women Sections on the question of candidates is worth while trying. Anyway, the whole problem of candidates is one demanding push and persuasion, and the job is best begun early.

On what policy will you fight your elections? For the Guardians and Rural Districts the foreshadowed abolition of Board of Guardians by a Tory Government is to be suspected, and the main proposals so far as they at present show ought to be exposed. Candidates should be encouraged to make themselves acquainted with Labour's own proposals for the abolition of the Poor Law and other aspects of this question.

The recent arbitrary actions of the Government in dealing with Poor Law Unions must be dealt with and fought; while, again, there is recent legislation conferring additional powers on Rural and District Councils concerning road improvements and so forth on which Labour policy would be to secure that the enactments do not become dead letters.

We mention the above questions as being new and particular points to be taken up and studied by candidates apart from the general policies of Labour which will be advocated and explained. Labour does not separate its local policy from its national policy, and while it is idle to talk at local elections entirely about national affairs, the proposed cut in education and the swindling of local authorities by the suggested raid on the road fund are fair matters for comment. So too is the Government's failure in regard to unemployment, whereby an utterly unjust burden is cast on Board of Guardians and local ratepayers.

WANTED, SEPTEMBER, 1925, COPIES OF THE "L.O."

Will readers who have spare copies of the September issue of the "Labour Organiser" please be good enough to return same immediately to the Editor? Cash at wholesale rates will be paid for such returned copies, which are required for binding purposes only. Copies of other issues should not be sent.

POLITICAL EUNUCHS.

BY ONE OF THE LEAST OF THEM.
(Contributed.)

At the Tory Conference recently the Hon. F. S. Jackson took the opportunity of very ostentatiously scratching the backs of the Conservative Agents, and reminding them that they had to be men of ability and foresight, quick to read character, good publicists, orators, with more than a little ability as accountants, and with this wealth of endowment, ever ready to sustain the burden of their Party's machinery.

If that is the specification of a good Tory Agent, how shall we succeed in outlining his counterpart in the Labour Movement? Here we find the need demands not a man of "many" parts but a man of a million. He has to be a good Trade Unionist understanding thoroughly Trade Union organisation, and the peculiar temper and genius of that movement—so obviously a closed door to most journalists. He has, in many places, to be conversant with modern liberal religious ideas, for the strength of many of our local parties is made up of people who find their way to our ranks through the development of their religious ideas. He has, almost inevitably, to be a good speaker, and often a propagandist. It is a *sine qua non* that he should be a good organiser.

But, if the writer mistakes not, our rapidly developing Party demands that a re-examination of the function and position of our Agents should take place. Some of our fellows have already secured a Parliamentary career. Doubtless more will follow, for that is natural. Many of our comrades serve on their local Borough and City Councils, and one feels that very frequently that work absorbs so much of their time, as to divorce their attention from the more humdrum work of developing and perfecting their Party machinery. Perhaps by reason of their known grasp of the Party's programme, perhaps by reason of the paucity of men of expression in any constituency, our members frequently find themselves urged to become candidates for Municipal honours. During the present year the writer has been asked by no less than three fellow-agents for his view as to the wisdom of accepting such a position. Take the case of a man who is a Councillor, a Guardian, on a Co-operative Board of Directors, a Justice of the Peace, and the Agent in a Constituency,

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and then ask yourself how much really effective work as an organiser that man can do, and if he courageously make the attempt, how long he will last?

Then there is the more frequent case of the man who, appointed Agent and Secretary of a Party, finds his secretarial duties—calling the ever-increasing Committees, minuting their proceedings, calling the necessary business meetings, minuting their proceedings, arranging conferences, public meetings, demonstrations, and the hundred-and-one demands of continuous public agitation—leave him no time to do the more specific Agency work which is the *raison d'être* of the agents of the older political parties.

Happily men (and women) of diverse and pronounced platform ability are everywhere joining our ranks, and the younger generation of trade unionist is more generally permeated with a gift of expression as to provide splendid seed-ground for future propagandists. It would seem, therefore, that on the platform side our Agent would require not to develop his own platform powers so much, as to develop the instinct which recognises the latent orator and secures opportunity for the development of the oratorical gift. One feels that our Agents will more and more have to set their faces against the demands of their Parties for platform effort; whilst employing Parties will, if they are wise, consider not so much the platform appeal a man may make, as his power to utilise to the full the oratorical

and other man-power at the disposal of his Party. And employing Parties, too, should learn that they are to-day very generally endangering the usefulness of their Agent by their (at present) incessant and unthinking demands upon his time for the meanest of secretarial duties. Undoubtedly it is as full-time secretary alone that many of our Agents function, and only on the eve of elections is attention to the fundamental machinery of electioneering considered necessary.

To the writer, therefore, it would seem that what our Movement demands is the development of a sort of political eunuch—one who will not be either the Public Orator or the General Secretary of his Party—nor definitely associated with either left-wing or right-wing policies—a protagonist never—but one who, sound on the full programme of his Party, will unceasingly strive to focus on public attention, through the skilful use of his speakers, his publicists, his canvassers, and the infinite opportunities which developed machinery may supply, the radiance of the Labour Programme, and thus, not by his own voice, or by his own *public* effort, but by the considered and concentrated use of a thousand different elements, develop in the unthinking and heedless crowd an enthusiasm for *The Dawn*.

WHY NOT HAVE A PENCIL DAY?

Pencils with special lettering for
Bazaars, Sports, Building
Funds, etc.

**GRETA PENCIL
MILLS, KESWICK**

Price list on application.

OUT OF THE RUT

IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES IN BRIEF.

"Coventry in the Hands of Moneylenders."

Electioneering literature must nowadays consist of well-thought-out matter which immediately arrests attention, and then grips the reader by its telling facts pithily presented. Such a leaflet we recently discovered at Coventry, and we reproduce it because of its qualities in the direction indicated. The Candidate, Mr. G. E. Hodgkinson, is the Labour Agent for Coventry.

A Bolton Election Address.

One of the daintiest municipal election addresses that we have seen was issued by Mr. H. Eastwood, now Councillor Eastwood, the Labour Agent at Bolton. The address itself was an art production (13½ in. x 7½ in., folded into three) containing a brief and effectively illustrated message, together with excellently reproduced

photographs of the candidates. This folder was enclosed in a dainty buff illustrated wrapper, admirable also for the purpose of addressing. It is impossible to adequately describe the effect, and we trust Councillor Eastwood has got some spare copies which he can send to enquirers who read this notice. The election address has struck a novel note. It is artistic and not blatant. It indicates the growing tendency to artistic effect in political literature and in that respect we consider it marks progress. That it was also successful the results show. Four seats were held by increased majorities, and five others were won in addition. There were two losses, but these were by votes of 36 and 40 only. The Labour Party is now the official opposition in Bolton, and as indicated above the Agent himself was among the winners.

Another feature of the election was the issue of the Bolton "Labour

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS, 1925

Coventry ^{in the} _{hands of} Moneylenders

The Municipal Debt is

£3,848,117

Interest Charges 1924 - £188,675

—Sidney Larkin, City Treasurer, Report 1924.

**This is how LIBERALS and TORIES
"SAVE" the Rates. Interest on Debt, 1924,
is equivalent to a Rate of over 7s. in the £.**

	Per 1,000
Infantile Mortality in Coventry 1923	64
" " " 1924	79
Average England and Wales 1924	75

"It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that this increase is largely due to the regrettable set-back in the routine work of the Health Visitors, when at the beginning of 1923 their numbers were suddenly reduced from 10 to 5."

—Dr. Snell, Medical Officer of Health, Report 1924.

Labour stands for Life, not Death

Vote for Hodgkinson

News," an issue of practical size of which 25,000 copies were distributed.

Where the I.L.P. Leads.

We should not do justice if when speaking of tasteful literature we failed to mention the lead which the I.L.P. gives in this direction with its various publications. At this moment there lies on our desk a delightful little sachet containing the leaflet announcements of some half-a-dozen recent I.L.P. publications. To say that the get-up tempts one to explore the contents and that the leaflets attract one after another by their get-up, is but a poor way of expressing the gratification one feels. It is better to say that in these things one perceives something of the true inwardness of the I.L.P. teaching; one gets the best only when we realise that a harsh materialism is as grossly demoralising when perpetrated in print as it is when applied to the facts of life. As deep calls to deep, so art draws out of man the art and soul that is in every being, however lowly his home and humble his place upon the register!

A Diary of Events.

We have before commended the publication in advance of a list of Party activities month by month. While it may not be possible to include every Party function for an ensuing month a diary of the principal events has nevertheless an excellent impression both on insiders and outsiders of the Party. Here we present a diary printed in the current issue of the "Colchester Times," which indicates a varied activity and is an excellent example to others. The agent of the Colchester D.L.P. is Mr. P. F. Pollard and the "Colchester Times" is in itself a really creditable Party activity.

Diary of Events at Labour Party Club: and Party Meetings.

December.

Please retain this for reference.

- 5 S Eld Lane Club, Members' Dance, 7.0.
- 6 S Belle Vue Club, Class in "Evolution," 10.30.
- 7 M Eld Lane Club, Whist Drive, 7.30, admission 2/- £10 Voucher Top

Belle Vue Club, 8.30, **Dancing Class**, Instructor, Mr. Waldron, admission 1/-.

- 8 T Eld Lane Club, 7.0, Labour Loan Club pay out to members.
- 9 W Eld Lane Club, Dance, 7.0, admission 6d.
- 10 Th Eld Lane Club, and Co-op. Hall, arrangements for Muckle Mercat.
- Belle Vue Club, Whist Drive, 7.30, admission 1/-.
- 11 F **Muckle Mercat** (a Two Days' Xmas Bazaar and Fair.—Ed. "L.O."), opening at 3 p.m. by **Lady Warwick**, Co-op. Hall and Eld Lane Club, admission 6d.
- 12 S **Muckle Mercat**, opening at 3 p.m. by **Counc. Dr. Bensusan-Butt**, admission 3d.
- 13 S Belle Vue Club, 10.30, "Evolution" Class.
- 14 M Eld Lane Club, Whist Drive, 7.30, admission 1/-.
- Belle Vue Club, 8.30, Dancing Class, admission 1/-.
- I.L.P. Meeting, 7 St. Botolph's Street—Mrs. Godfrey (Divisional Secretary).
- 15 T Eld Lane Club, Women's Section, 7.0.
- Belle Vue Club, Social & Dance, admission 6d., Musical Programme by the "Arclight Musical Society," under the direction of Mr. Jas. Hiron.
- 17 Th Eld Lane Club, Dance, admission 6d., 7.0.
- Belle Vue Club, Whist Drive, 7.30, admission 1/-.
- 18 F Eld Lane Club, Y.L.L., 7.0.
- 19 S Eld Lane Club, Members' Dance, 7.0.
- 20 S Belle Vue Club, Study Class, "Evolution," 10.30.
- 21 M Eld Lane Club, Whist Drive, 7.30, 1/-.
- Belle Vue Club, 8.30, Dancing Class, admission 1/-.
- 23 W Christmas Distribution of Special Effort Fund Prizes, 7.30
- 24 T Eld Lane Club, **Carnival Dance**, admission 1/-.
- Belle Vue Club, Whist Drive, 7.30.
- 25 F Club closed.
- 26 S "
- 28 M Eld Lane Club, 7.30, Whist Drive, admission 1/-.

- Belle Vue Club, Dancing Class,
8.30, admission 1/-.
- 29 T Eld Lane Club, Women's Section,
7.0.
- 31 Th Eld Lane Club, 7.0, **Carnival
Dance**, admission 1/-.
- January.
- 6 W **Minnie Pallister** at Eld Lane
Club, 7.30.
- 19 T Belle Vue Club, Special Meeting
of all women members in
the North Ward to form
Women's Section, at 7.30 p.m.
- 31 S **George Lansbury, M.P.**, Moot
Hall, 7.45.

Gravesend Again.

We have received the programme and results of the Gravesend People's Fair, held on November 12th, 13th, 14th. Enclosed with these particulars is a set of the literature used in organising the Fair, for which we are particularly grateful, as numbers of enquiries reach this office for hints and help upon the organisation of these bazaars and fairs. We have sent the literature on to a friend in need of just these examples.

As to the fair itself the Organiser, Mr. Hunt, is apparently disappointed

that the result was not greater, although a profit of £101 10s. 7d. is certainly something not to be sneezed at. It appears, however, that there is a real difficulty in getting a hall suitable for the organisation of a function of this character, and the only hall obtainable has no ante-rooms and is not over large at that. This shuts out some of those remunerative side-shows, which, like the mustard one leaves on the plate, are often the best paying items in the show. However, we understand that in addition to the profit noted some goods are still being sold through the Women's Section Clubs—again a novel feature for most Women's Section—and the remainder is being held over to another bazaar now being arranged by one of the country Women Sections. Mr. Hunt writes:—"I would like to point out the advantage of the entrance ticket (which we reproduce below). Some 2,000 of the counterfoils were handed in at the door and in addition to this preliminary income the names and addresses on the counterfoil come in most useful for recording likely votes and likely members."

GRAVESEND DIVISIONAL LABOUR PARTY.

Peoples Fair and Carnibal

at

Freeborn's Hall, Gravesend,

Opening by Mrs. PHILIP SNOWDEN.

Friday, November 13th, 3 p.m.

Saturday, November 14th, 3 p.m.

STALLS. AFTERNOON TEAS & REFRESHMENTS. SIDE SHOWS. COMPETITIONS, ETC.

Admit to Bazaar (1 day only) Price 3d.

This ticket entitles the holder to a free chance in the Grand Fair Competition.

1st. Prize	-	A Gent's Suit or Lady's Costume.
2nd. "	-	1 Ton Coal.
3rd. "	-	Tea Service.

No.

Hand this
portion in at
the Bazaar.

Name

No.

INSTRUCTIONAL LITERATURE FOR WORKERS.

We have frequently been asked for suitable report forms which may be used in the internal work of Divisional Labour Parties. In the September, 1925, issue we reproduced a form in use among the Birmingham Wards, and we now reproduce a Report Form used in a County Division. It will be noted that every detail of Party activity is provided for except that another form is used for greater detail concerning collections from members.

Caerphilly Divisional Labour Party.

REPORT SHEET *for the Month of*.....192...
For the.....Local Labour Party.

Meeting Place :—Public
 „ „ Party and Committee.....
 Day upon which Party Meetings are usually held.....Time.....
 How often does the Party meet.....Next Meeting.....
 Membership (Individual).....Societies Affiliated.....
 „ (Affiliated) approximately.....
 Meetings held during the month—Public..... Party..... Committee.....
 Literature distributed or sold.....New Members.....
 Goods received from the Organiser during the month :—

 Monies sent to the Organiser during the month—Contributions.....£ : :
 Affiliation Fees.....£ : :
 Other Payments.....£ : :
 £ : :

Do you desire a visit from the Organiser? If so, give dates

Remarks :

Name and Address of Executive Committee Member—

Name and Address of Secretary—

Signed Chairman.
 Secretary.

Make Cheques and Money Orders payable to the Treasurer, and post together with Report Sheet to the Organiser, on or before the 15th of each month.

Official Receipts only will be recognised.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"Selection Conferences."

Question.—Will you please tell us through the "Labour Organiser" what is meant by the term "properly constituted Selection Conference?" There is some doubt in the minds of our members as to how a selection conference should be convened, and as to who is entitled to attend, and as this matter affects the selection of our candidate we should like a clear understanding on the matter.

Answer.—We could dispose of this question in a sentence by the time-honoured reply "that there ain't no sich thing." Our friends will look in vain in the Constitution and Model Rules of the Labour Party for any reference to the term "selection conference," although the procedure for selecting candidates is laid down in several places. One has to go back to a period prior to the adoption of the present rules of the Party in order to find any official reference to a selection conference in the Constitution or Standing Orders of the Party. It is true that the term is still commonly used concerning the meeting at which a candidate is selected, but it is a misnomer and the selection meeting of a candidate is not a conference in the colloquial sense in which that word is commonly used.

Candidates prior to the period above-mentioned were selected by "a regularly-convened Labour Party Conference" in the constituency, and there was a definite interpretation of that term laid down by the Hull Conference in 1908. The interpretation was as follows:—

"All branches of affiliated organisations within a constituency or divided borough covered by a proposal to run a Labour Candidate must be invited to send delegates to the Conference, and the local organisation responsible for calling the Conference may, if it thinks fit, invite representatives from branches of organisations not affiliated but eligible for affiliation."

Now when the Party in 1918 adopted its new rules it contemplated the creation of a permanent Divisional Labour Party in every Division, and it was obvious that where such machinery existed it would be this Divisional Labour Party which would

select the candidate. Certainly no scratch-convened body with no permanence and no responsibility, could be expected to function for the selection of candidates, and "selection conferences," as formerly known, passed entirely out of the usage of the Party. The rules provide for the "General Committee" of every Divisional Party making the selection, and this provision is, of course, an infinitely more democratic and commonsense way of selecting candidates than that which formerly existed. It has the advantage besides of placing the selection in the hands of those who would thereafter have the responsibility of running the contest; and perhaps financing it as well.

We are well aware that in certain undeveloped constituencies there may not be a General Committee in existence or meeting at proper intervals; or any such body which could readily be convened for the purpose of selection. The question also sometimes arises as to whether affiliated organisations shall be invited to appoint delegates for the purposes of a selection meeting rather than rely upon the list of delegates sent in at some earlier period. There is something to be said for this course, but in all such cases above noted these are matters for consultation with the District Organiser of the Party, whose advice is safe to rely upon in such cases.

Communist Discussions.

Question.—At a recent Divisional meeting a resolution on the lines below was put forward and I should like to know from you if the chairman would have been right in ruling this out of order. Also is the resolution, in your opinion, in conflict with the Liverpool decisions?

The resolution referred to was contained in a letter from an affiliated branch which stated that they, being an organisation connected with the Divisional Party, through a local affiliation, wished to suggest to the Divisional Executive the desirability of holding a special E.C. meeting for the purpose of thrashing out the vexed question of Communism. Should their suggestion be carried through they felt that clearer views might then be held on the problem.

Answer.—The first thing that strikes us about this letter from an affiliated branch is its courteous wording, and the fact that it is not at all dictatorial in manner; nor we think can anyone suggest that it is of Communist origin, for would not Communists have preferred a discussion in an open general meeting rather than by the Executive Committee? But what the senders of the letter actually desire is not so clear. Is it a general discussion on the whole aims and policy of the Communist Party, or a discussion on the Liverpool decisions?

In any case it seems to us that the branch were acting quite legitimately and there would be no ground whatever for the chairman ruling this letter and a discussion thereon as "out of order" at the Executive meeting at which it was read. We can only assume that a chairman would desire to take this course on the assumption that the Liverpool decision put an end to discussions on Communism within the Party. But this of course they did not do, and could not do. Discussion is a legitimate thing, even concerning the principles with which we may not agree, provided such discussion is initiated by legitimate means and no other rules of order, or

Standing Orders are infringed. There is even something to be said for such a discussion taking place within the Party if it would lead to the clearing away of misunderstandings. The Liverpool resolutions themselves would be open to discussion on a report from the delegate thereto, or on a resolution approving or disapproving of them. The whole point of our answer is that chairmen and officers must not conclude that the Liverpool decisions, binding though they are on the Party throughout, have shut and banged the door against any future discussion within the Party on that or kindred questions. Certain matters have been emphatically decided, but the rightest "right-winger" in the Party could not desire to choke off all further talk. It is precisely this question of free expression which has rallied all progressive thought to the Communists over the recent trial, and this attitude is quite consistent with a disbelief in Communist theories. But on the other hand discussions on Communism must be prevented from overshadowing or excluding other rightful business — nor is it the purpose of this reply to encourage such discussions, but merely to deal fairly with rights that exist.

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Manager

NOT ECCLESTON SQUARE.

Our readers will be interested in the following laudatory notice concerning certain arrangements at the Head Offices of the Tory Party which we have culled from the columns of a particularly salivary contemporary of Conservative persuasions:—

The progressive character of the Conservative and Unionist Central Office at Palace Chambers, Westminster, is well evidenced by the most recent addition to its Publications Dept. Structural alterations have permitted a spacious room to be set aside solely for the display of topical political handbooks, pamphlets, leaflets and posters.

Fitted and furnished in accordance with the most up-to-date methods, Party workers and political students can now readily see specimens of the latest literature obtainable on current problems, whilst ample accommodation exists for them to be studied in quietude and comfort. Beneath the bookcases, in which are displayed an extensive collection of the more exhaustive works of well-known writers and publicists—including the popular "Westminster Library"—is a novel form of "reading ledges," on which books can be rested whilst their contents are being perused.

Special cases are allotted to the display of pamphlets and leaflets, the subjects with which they deal being conveniently grouped so as to be "seen at a glance." The centre table is devoted to the many periodical publications issued by the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations. One wall is entirely occupied by specimens of the latest political posters, whilst dominating the apartment is a life-like portrait of the Prime Minister, appropriately flanked by a coloured map of the British Empire, showing the products obtained from each Dominion and Colony, and a framed chart detailing legislation passed for the working classes by Conservative and Unionist Governments. A member of the Headquarters staff is in constant attendance to afford any information which may

be desired concerning Party publications. The invitation "Please Enter," displayed on the main door, strikes the note of welcome which awaits all visitors to this most useful adjunct to the Conservative and Unionist Central Office.

And again:—

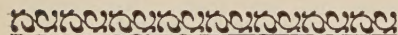
Whilst the other two political parties have been engaged in internecine quarrels, the Unionist Party has been busily engaged in keeping its organisation thoroughly up-to-date. At the Conservative and Unionist Party Headquarters of late several schemes have been under consideration, having as their object the further improvement of the Party Organisation. Many of these have now reached maturity. Details have been embodied in various manuals covering between them the whole range of local organisations, and are forthwith to be put into operation.

Party agents have now, as an additional incentive to the attainment of 100-per-cent. efficiency in the matter of organisation, the opportunity of competing for two championship shields which have been presented by Sir William Bull, M.P.—one for Boroughs and the other for County Constituencies. These will be presented to the successful competitors on the occasion of the Annual Conference of the Party. Honorariums will be given to the winners, and also those who secure second and third places in the competition.

Greater attention is, in future, to be devoted to the political education side, both of adults and juniors. To provide the necessary framework upon which to base it, the proposal is to start, in every constituency, an Educational Committee which would be linked to the local Executive. The main task of such Committees would be to secure the services of capable and well-educated men and women, willing and able to give lectures in public, or

to small classes, on topical, political, and economic subjects. It is believed that there are many people of the right stamp prepared to undertake such educational work. Moreover, it is claimed that the work of guiding young adults is so varied, there is room for many types of men and women instructors.

The educational classes would embrace study groups, or circles; tutorial classes; public lectures and individual tuition—both oral and by correspondence. Various courses are now in the course of preparation by the Central Office, which has set up a special Educational Department whose mission it will be to direct and develop this new movement and to which local Educational Committees can turn for assistance and advice.

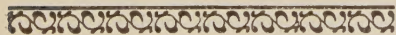


**IS YOUR AGENT A MEMBER
of the**

National Association of Labour Registration and Election Agents?

*(Acts as the Trade Union
for Labour Organisers)*

**General Secretary: H. DRINKWATER,
Ladywood, Fernhill Heath, near Worcester**



TITLE PAGE AND INDEX FOR 1925.

The January issue of the "Labour Organiser" will contain a full index of the contents for 1925, together with title page. Readers desiring to bind their copies for the current year should not fail to get this number. A limited number of bound copies for 1925 will shortly be on sale.

Ministers of Religion

(Removal of Disqualification) Act,
1925.

(15 & 16 Geo. 5, Ch. 54.)

CHAPTER 54.

An Act to remove the disqualification of ministers of religion for being borough councillors.

BE it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1. From the passing of this Act no person shall be disqualified for being elected or being a councillor of a borough by reason only that he is in holy orders or the regular minister of a dissenting congregation.

2. (1) This Act may be cited as the Ministers of Religion (Removal of Disqualifications) Act, 1925.

(2) Paragraph (b) of sub-section (1) of section twelve of the Municipal Corporations Act, 1882, is hereby repealed.

(3) This Act shall not apply to Northern Ireland.

NOTE.—Section 12 of the Municipal Corporation Act 1882, of which sub-section 1 (b) is now repealed, reads as follows:—

12. (1) A person shall be disqualified for being elected and for being a councillor, if and while he—

(a)

(b) Is in holy orders, or the regular minister of a dissenting congregation;

How many people realise that the world-wide fame of pencil-making was born in Keswick? In the far-off days of Elizabeth, when Cumberland graphite was one of England's greatest assets, the Royal soldiers guarded the pack-horse convoys from Keswick to London, the local joiner made himself a wooden casing to guard his "graph." Later, the parish priest admired the novelty, and the obliging joiner made him one. Other Churchmen carried the novelty to the Royal Court, and the "Keswick" pencils became famous. Our readers may obtain further interesting particulars, and also prices, by writing to Messrs. Billinge, whose advertisement appears in this issue.

1926 Calendar

Sample

6d.

post free

3 Colour 9x7 Bordered Card, embodying the Labour Party Badge, with Shield and Red Flags.

Your own Candidate's Photo with suitable wording for your own Division.

Tear-off Calendar for 1926. Punched, strung and enveloped ready for Sale at 6d. each.

Prices :—Customers find their own Block,

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Carriage paid

Delivery :—About a week after receipt of Block by the Printers

Send for Samples to Ed. J. ALFORD,
Agent Penryn-Falmouth Div. Lab. Party,
12 ST. NICHOLAS ST., TRURO

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Journal devoted to the
organisation of Labour*

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PREPAID ADVERTISEMENTS

Advertisements under this heading are inserted at the special rate of twenty-four words for 2s., and 6d. for each additional six words, or less. Cash must accompany order. Three insertions are charged at the rate of two-and-a-half. Displayed advertisements, prepaid, are charged 4s. per inch, with special discount for a series.

DON'T wait on Commission Report, reduce living costs now. Send for patterns, suit or costume, any length; Tweed or Serge.—R. A. Anderson, Co-op. Buildings, Galashiels.

HOTELS.

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BALMORAL HOTEL

21 TAVISTOCK SQUARE, W.C.

OSBORNE HOTEL

2 GORDON PLACE, W.C.
Near Euston, St. Pancras and King's Cross.
Room, Attendance and Breakfast, 6/6 & 7/6.

FOR REGISTRATION AGENTS.

The following is the most recent R.P. circular. It will be noted that its interest is purely domestic and remindful to Registration Officers.

Representation of the People Acts, 1918-1922.

SPRING REGISTER, 1925.

The Under-Secretary of State desires to remind the Registration Officer that in accordance with the Representation of the People Act, 1922, the qualifying period for the Spring register, 1926, is the six months ending on the 15th instant, and that other dates for the proceedings in the preparation of the register are specified in the Schedule to the Act. In preparing the register, regard should be had to the remarks in the circulars of the 15th November, 1924 and 19th May, 1925, relating to the Spring and Autumn registers of 1925.

Home Office,
Whitehall,
3rd December, 1925.